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ABSTRACT

As an extension of ideas suggested in an earlier paper which proposed a project control system for Indiana University's Audio-Visual Center (see EM 010 306), this paper examines the establishment of project legitimacy and priority within the system and reviews the need to stimulate specific research proposals as well as generating a matrix of research needs. Legitimacy is discussed in terms of its fit within the Center's functions and its meeting of operational department needs. Priorities are discussed according to different levels of both absolute and relative importance. Finally, a three-step matrix construction process is set forth: identifying the discrete processes engaged in by the Center, identifying the research and training needs of these processes, and establishing relative priorities of the processes and second and third level activities related to the processes. (SH)

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PRIORITY DETERMINATION FOR AVC FUNDED R&D PROJECTS

by

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This paper examines some of the questions hinted at in my earlier paper (R&D PROJECT CONTROL SYSTEM, May 1970) in connection with the establishment of project legitimacy and priority within the proposed R&D control system. The need to stimulate specific research proposals as well as a method of generating a matrix of research needs will be presented.

There are two basic approaches which can be taken in the generation of decision oriented research, both of which could work within the proposed R&D control process:

(1) Allow ideas to be developed by individuals and then, when submitted, determine if they fit within the objectives and operational needs of the Audio-Visual Center. This allows for the maximum degree of freedom for the individual to pursue his personal research interests, but is probably the least productive way of developing a large, coordinated body of knowledge upon which to base operational decisions.

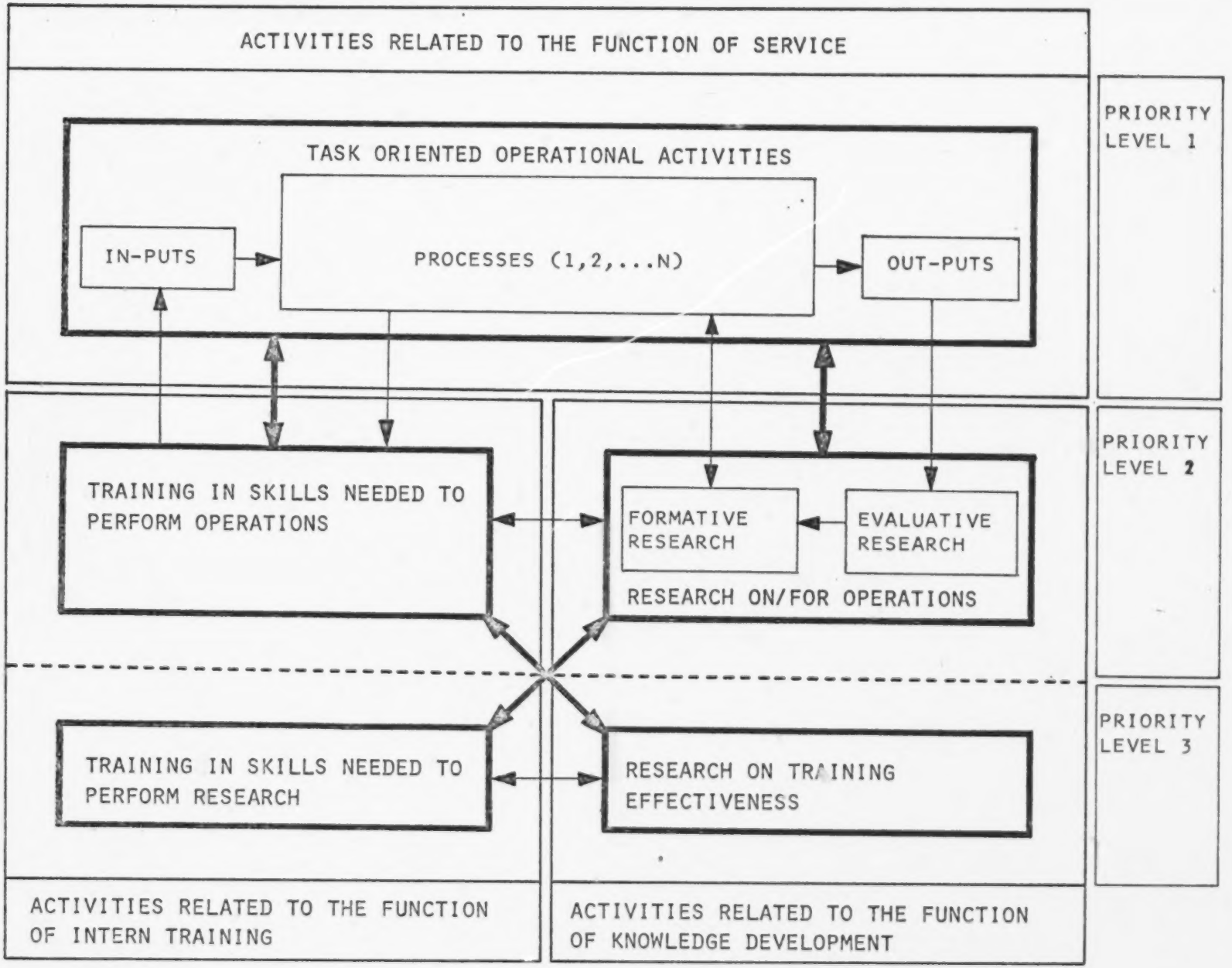
(2) Identify the operational research needs, establish priorities, seek out individuals whose research interests and skills fit most closely to the need, and put them to work. This approach would still allow an individual to generate and propose research projects but would insure that the idea would be judged against a pre-deter-

mined matrix of needs and priorities, rather than the need for and priority of the study being determined after the idea is proposed, and that the results of the study would fit into a coordinated body of knowledge.

The paradigm on the following page seeks to present a basis for a matrix of need and priority which could be constructed for the Audio-Visual Center. The paradigm grows out of questions which might be asked under the screening process for R&D proposals described in the May paper.

LEGITIMACY

The first question raised in the screening process is concerned with the legitimacy of the research proposal. As suggested in the paper, there are two sides to the question of legitimacy: (1) Does it fit within the Audio-Visual Center functions ? (2) Does it meet operational department needs? The functions of the Audio-Visual Center have been defined as "Service," "Intern Training," and "Knowledge Development." The activities which appear in the paradigm are initially grouped to reflect these three functions. The first AVC function, both in sequence and in importance, is that of service. Service is the reason for being of the Audio-Visual Center. It is service to the University which justifies the direct appropriation to the Center and it is service to clients which justifies the income to the Center through the Film Library and Field Services. All other activities of the Center, either in terms of intern training or knowledge development, can only be justified in terms of their contributions to the primary function of service. The prime


ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE FUNCTION OF SERVICE
TASK ORIENTED OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES
IN-PUTS
PROCESSES (1,2,...N)
OUT-PUTS
PRIORITY LEVEL 1
TRAINING IN SKILLS NEEDED TO PERFORM OPERATIONS
FORMATIVE RESEARCH
EVALUATIVE RESEARCH
RESEARCH ON/FOR OPERATIONS
PRIORITY LEVEL 2
TRAINING IN SKILLS NEEDED TO PERFORM RESEARCH
RESEARCH ON TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS
PRIORITY LEVEL 3
ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE FUNCTION OF INTERN TRAINING
ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE FUNCTION OF KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

importance of service is the distinguishing characteristic between the Audio-Visual Center and a more traditional academic department, such as the Division of Instructional Systems Technology. In an academic department the emphasis would be reversed, with primary emphasis on training and research and with service being performed only as time and resources allowed.

PRIORITIES

The relation of training and research to service within the Audio-Visual Center raises the second question which was identified in the description of the R&D control process--that of priorities. The paradigm makes a second grouping of activities based on priorities. Within the first level of priority are the operational activities. Within the second level are those activities which are separate from but contribute directly to the achievement of the goals of the primary level activities. Within the third level are those activities which are related to the second level. Not only are there three basic levels of priority, but there are degrees of priority within the levels. It would be foolish to assume that all of the processes engaged in by the Audio-Visual Center are of equal importance. Also, it would be foolish to assume that all possible research questions related to a single process are of equal importance. The priority of a process would affect the priority of the research questions related to the process when compared with research questions related to other processes. It would not be unusual for a priority level two question, related to an extremely important process, to have a

relative priority above that of some priority level one processes. Thus the problem is one of establishing relative, as well as, absolute, priorities.

MATRIX CONSTRUCTION

The task of building the matrix can be set forth as a three step process:

(1) Identify the discrete processes engaged in by the AVC.

This task should be carried out by the Administration staff working with and securing the concurrence of the Department Heads.

(2) Identify the research and training needs of these processes.

This task should be carried out by Department Heads in conjunction with the Doctoral level faculty.

(3) Establish relative priorities of the processes and of the second and third level activities related to the processes.

This should be done by the AVC Administration in conjunction with Department Heads and the University Office of Academic Affairs. Once such a matrix has been established, it should be publicized so that interested staff members might generate R&D ideas which would stand a good chance of being funded.